

SECRETARY'S STRATEGIC INITIATIVES & KEY INTER-AGENCY COLLABORATIONS



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“Our goal is for all Americans to live healthier, more prosperous, and more productive lives.”

- Secretary Kathleen Sebelius



Secretary's Strategic Initiatives

- **Transform Health Care**
- **Implement the Recovery Act**
- **Promote Early Childhood Health and Development**
- **Help Americans Achieve and Maintain Healthy Weight**
- **Prevent and Reduce Tobacco Use**
- **Protect the Health and Safety of Americans in Public Health Emergencies**
- **Accelerate the Process of Scientific Discovery to Improve Patient Care**
- **Implement a 21st Century Food Safety System**
- **Ensure Program Integrity and Responsible Stewardship**



Our Vision

At the Department of Health and Human Services, our mission is to help provide the building blocks that Americans need to live healthy, successful lives. We fulfill that mission every day by providing millions of children, families, and seniors with access to high-quality health care, by helping people find jobs and parents find affordable child care, by keeping the food on Americans' shelves safe and infectious diseases at bay, and by pushing the boundaries of how we diagnose and treat disease.

To achieve these goals, we must always keep an eye on the future – to prepare for the next public health emergency, to pursue the next lifesaving cure, and to support the development of the next generation of Americans. But we must also frequently look closer at old programs and existing services and ask: What needs to be changed? How can we serve Americans better? What can be done less expensively, faster and more transparently?

These priorities reflect both considerations – a clear-eyed view of the new investments we will need to meet the challenges and opportunities of a new decade, and a tough-minded assessment about how we can reform and refocus existing programs to make an even bigger difference in Americans' lives.

Together, they form our vision for how our department can contribute to an even stronger, healthier, and more prosperous America in the years to come.

Learn more about this priority by watching the video at <http://www.hhs.gov/secretary/about/vision.html>



Transform Health Care

With historic health care reform (the Affordable Care Act) now law, we have an opportunity to improve the health of millions of Americans. As the principal federal agency in charge of improving Americans' health and implementing the Affordable Care Act, we will seek to drive down costs, put more money in the hands of the American people, and ensure all Americans receive the health care services they need and deserve. These actions will increase transparency, eliminate waste, and put Americans back in charge of their health care.

- **Make Coverage More Secure for Those Who Have Insurance; Extend Affordable Coverage to the Uninsured**

HHS will enroll eligible children and hard-to-reach populations in health insurance programs; make coverage more stable and secure through insurance market reforms; establish health insurance exchanges that allow individuals and small businesses to compare plans and buy insurance at competitive prices.

- **Reduce Health Care Costs while Promoting High-Value, Effective Care**

HHS will strengthen program integrity efforts that combat Medicare and Medicaid fraud, waste, and abuse; move Medicare to a system that rewards efficient, effective care and reduces delivery system fragmentation; better align Medicare reimbursement rates with provider costs; and encourage widespread adoption and meaningful use of health information technology while ensuring the privacy and security of electronic health records.

- **Emphasize Primary Care, Prevention and Wellness**

HHS will establish Medicare and Medicaid payment and delivery system policies that value primary care and promote prevention and wellness; develop programs that expand the primary care workforce and encourage health care professionals to practice in health shortage areas; and promote healthy lifestyles and evidence-based disease prevention programs.

- **Improve Health Care Quality and Patient Safety**

HHS will invest in patient-centered research; implement payment reforms that reward quality care and reduce health care associated infections; and institute delivery system reforms that encourage care coordination and improved patient outcomes.

- **Ensure Access to Quality, Culturally Competent Care for Vulnerable Populations**

HHS will institute policies that encourage care management for patients eligible for both Medicare and Medicaid and patients with chronic illnesses; reduce disparities associated with patients' race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status; ensure mental health parity in health insurance; improve early detection of mental health and substance use disorders; and promote coordinated, evidence-based care for individuals with behavioral health issues.

- **Promote Community Living**

HHS will improve the accessibility and quality of health and support services to enable people with disabilities and seniors with impaired functioning to live in community settings.

Learn more about this priority by watching the video at <http://www.hhs.gov/secretary/about/transform.html>



Implement the Recovery Act

The [American Recovery and Reinvestment Act \(Recovery Act\)](#) was designed to create and save jobs, give families immediate relief, and make investments that lay the foundation for long-term economic growth.

HHS is playing a major role in all of these aspects of the Recovery Act – helping to create jobs in industries from health care to research and development; supporting struggling families by providing health insurance and subsidized employment opportunities; and making long-term investments in areas such as health information technology, biomedical and patient-centered health research, and prevention and wellness efforts.

These early investments in improving our health system in the Recovery Act will serve as the cornerstone of our efforts to implement the new health reform law and put Americans back in control of their own health care. To get the most out of these investments, we need to award Recovery Act funds as rapidly as possible, while at the same time ensuring that funds are spent wisely and that the public can follow our progress.

We have established the following key Secretarial strategies for the ongoing implementation of the Recovery Act. These strategies will ensure that we make great strides in improving access to health and social services, stimulating job creation, and transforming our health care system.

- **Award Funds Expeditiously to States and Local Communities**

Overall, the Recovery Act enables HHS to award \$141 billion; HHS is putting these funds to work as expeditiously as possible, while maintaining high standards of program quality and integrity. In the first year, HHS has obligated \$70 billion and will be announcing and awarding an additional \$32 billion in 2010 and \$40 billion in the 2011 to 2019 period.

- **Measure Program Performance and Ensure Program Integrity**

The Recovery Act invests billions of dollars in HHS programs and it is incumbent on HHS and its agencies to ensure that these funds are spent wisely and for the purposes intended by the Recovery Act. All Recovery Act funds have performance targets and goals associated with them. HHS will ensure that funds are invested appropriately and will collect information about program performance to track achievements.

- **Inform the Public About Results**

As our grantees and contractors implement programs funded by the Recovery Act, HHS will provide information about program performance to the public, members of Congress, and state and local communities.

Learn more about this priority by watching the video at <http://www.hhs.gov/secretary/about/implement.html>



Promote Early Childhood Health and Development

Children's early experiences are critical in shaping the foundation for their long-term development and growth. We know that with nurturing and responsive relationships with parents and caregivers and with challenging and engaging learning environments at home and in early care and education settings, young children are capable of tremendous growth and resilience in the face of adversity. HHS is committed to providing high quality early care and education for young children as well as to helping parents support children's health and development.

- **Improve Early Learning Program Quality and Young Children's School Readiness Outcomes**

HHS will work to foster higher quality in our two large early care and education programs – [Head Start](#) and the [Child Care and Development Fund](#). HHS will revise the Head Start Program Performance Standards and improve training for teachers and program directors, utilizing the latest research. HHS will ensure that Head Start programs meet the educational, health, and nutritional needs of the children and families they serve. HHS will promote the use of quality rating improvement systems in child care programs, which can provide families with valuable information about child care provider quality while encouraging and assisting providers to invest in quality improvements.

- **Support the Coordination of Services for Young Children and Their Families**

HHS will encourage states to bring together key decision-makers to improve early education across settings (e.g., prekindergarten, private preschools, Head Start, center-based child care, and family child care) through the [State Advisory Councils on Early Childhood](#). HHS will identify strategies for promoting high-quality systems of early learning across settings in States through the Early Learning and Development Inter-Departmental Initiative. These efforts can foster state and local connections between early learning programs and those providing high-quality health, nutrition, mental health, and family support services, as well as connections between early learning programs and elementary schools.

- **Increase Access to High-Quality Programs for Vulnerable Young Children and Families**

HHS will increase access to early learning programs as well as home visiting programs that can help parents respond to their children's developmental and health needs. Revisions to the [Head Start Program Performance Standards](#) and other efforts by the Department will ensure programs are available to respond to the unique needs of special populations, such as dual language learning children, children with disabilities, and Native American children. HHS will develop place-based strategies and encourage system-wide investments for serving children birth to 8 in low-income and resource-poor communities through the Early Learning Communities Initiative.



- **Ensure that Young Children's Home Experiences Support Children's Learning and Healthy Development**

HHS will strengthen home visitation services provided by States to families of young children through the implementation of the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program funded in the Affordable Care Act. Revised Head Start Program Performance Standards will emphasize encouraging family engagement in children's learning through support for partnerships between early childhood programs, parents, and families, and through support for family literacy activities.

Learn more about this priority by watching the video at <http://www.hhs.gov/secretary/about/promote.html>



Help Americans Achieve and Maintain Healthy Weight

Today, about two-thirds of U.S. adults and almost [one-third of U.S. children are overweight or obese](#), increasing their risk for chronic diseases, including heart disease, type II diabetes, certain cancers, stroke, and arthritis. Almost 10 percent of all medical spending goes to treat obesity-related conditions. In order to reverse the obesity epidemic in the U.S., we must employ a comprehensive approach that includes both clinical and public health strategies and touches people where they live, work, learn, and play. We have identified the following set of actions to help Americans achieve and maintain a healthy weight at all ages and stages of life.

- **Improve Nutrition and Physical Activity in Child Care Settings**

HHS will improve program standards for nutrition, physical activity, and television viewing time and promote more stringent child care licensing standards through state programs. HHS also will support access to safe, developmentally appropriate play spaces for children's physical activity. HHS will expand proven Head Start health programs to child care centers and other early childhood settings; implement assessment tools in funded programs; and provide a focal point for information about physical activity, nutrition, and television time.

- **Promote Healthy Behaviors at School**

HHS, working collaboratively with the Departments of Education and Agriculture, will develop and implement school-based interventions to improve school food and physical activity. HHS will revitalize the [President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports](#) and promote the [President's Fitness Challenge](#) to renew attention to children's fitness.

- **Become a Model Healthy Worksite and Promote Workplace Wellness**

HHS will identify and implement policy changes that help employees make healthy choices. HHS also will help workplaces across the nation to become healthier by promoting proven programs like [LEANWorks!](#) – a free resource to help worksites design obesity prevention and control programs.

- **Promote Healthy Weight through Medical Settings**

HHS will develop training tools to enhance awareness, knowledge, and skills for health care providers and others. HHS will describe covered obesity-related services under Medicaid and the [Children's Health Insurance Program](#) and emphasize healthy weight in pilot and demonstration programs. HHS also will support new health services research focused on priority populations.

- **Promote Community-wide Policies and Interventions that Work**

HHS will implement interventions that improve physical activity and nutrition through the [Communities Putting Prevention to Work](#) initiative. HHS will work to identify and disseminate community-wide model programs. HHS will conduct and evaluate a childhood obesity prevention and reduction demonstration project that connects the clinical care and community services systems to help children achieve and maintain healthy weight and good nutrition.



- **Empower Consumers to Make Healthy Choices in the Marketplace**

HHS will help consumers understand nutrition information on packaged foods by working with industry to develop new guidance for front-of-pack nutrition labeling. HHS will enact health reform provisions requiring calorie information on menus at chain restaurants and vending machines across the nation. In addition, HHS will collaborate with its public and private sector partners to encourage the reduction of salt and trans fats in the food supply.

Learn more about this priority by watching the video at <http://www.hhs.gov/secretary/about/help.html>



Prevent and Reduce Tobacco Use

Smoking harms nearly every organ of the body, causing many diseases and affecting the health of smokers in general. Quitting smoking has both immediate and long-term benefits for you and your loved ones. Despite progress in reducing tobacco use, more than [20% of Americans still smoke](#) and smoking rates that have been falling for decades have now stalled. The good news is that we know what it will take to get those numbers dropping again – comprehensive, sustained, and accountable tobacco control efforts based on evidence-based interventions.

We have identified the following set of actions to accelerate our efforts to prevent and reduce tobacco use.

- **Strengthen the Implementation of Evidence-based Tobacco Control Interventions and Policies in States and Communities**

HHS will work to accelerate adoption of comprehensive smoke-free laws in every state and will continue to support efforts to build state and local capacity to implement proven policy interventions. HHS will support comprehensive quit line services; focus greater attention on populations with a disproportionate burden of use and dependence; and increase local, state, and Tribal enforcement of tobacco regulation.

- **Change Social Norms Around Tobacco Use**

HHS will develop a comprehensive communication agenda to promote a culture change around tobacco use, including [national campaigns to prevent and reduce youth tobacco use](#) and increase knowledge about the evidence-base for and availability of treatment options. HHS will unify communication and education campaigns employed across HHS agencies.

- **Accelerate Research to Expand the Science Base and Monitor Progress**

HHS will develop and implement new research and surveillance activities to address gaps in knowledge about [what works in tobacco prevention and control](#), including in regulatory science, evolving product changes, industry practices, and public perception. We will also develop new prevention and treatment interventions for high-risk populations.

- **Leverage HHS Systems and Resources to Create a Society Free of Tobacco-related Disease and Death**

HHS will provide comprehensive cessation treatment across all its facilities and require HHS-funded programs to have or provide a plan for implementing tobacco-free campus policies. HHS will ensure that HHS health care providers offer cessation advice and referrals; enhance health care professionals' knowledge and adoption of effective treatments; and provide more powerful incentives to health care providers and others to promote cessation treatment.

Learn more about this priority by watching the video at <http://www.hhs.gov/secretary/about/prevent.html>



Protect the Health and Safety of Americans in Public Health Emergencies

Over the past decade, we've improved the nation's ability to address the public health and medical consequences of large-scale emergencies. Nonetheless, many challenges remain. HHS has developed a [National Health Security Strategy](#) to guide efforts to address the current gaps in national, state, local, and tribal preparedness and response capabilities as well as to build and foster more resilient communities and individuals. We have identified key strategic areas within the National Health Security Strategy to improve our ability to prepare and protect Americans in public health emergencies:

- **Foster Informed, Empowered Individuals and Communities**

HHS will promote community empowerment and support efforts to develop community plans; community capabilities to shelter, sustain themselves, and provide medical and other care; and active community engagement in local decision-making.

- **Develop and Maintain the Workforce Needed for National Health Security**

HHS will promote efforts to increase the number of staff and volunteers that are available to mount an effective response, including support for improvements in preparedness-related basic education, additional hiring of qualified staff, and pre-registration of competent volunteers.

- **Ensure Situational Awareness**

HHS will improve the Nation's ability to understand and use information related to health threats as well as health system and response resources. HHS also will improve information sharing across federal, state, and local entities to create a common picture of the incident and operating environment.

- **Foster Integrated, Scalable Health Care Delivery Systems**

HHS will work to improve the health care system's ability to expand its efforts in mass care situations while ensuring provision of the highest standard of care possible for the greatest number of patients. HHS also will work to increase public understanding and use of self-triage and self-care tools that reduce health care system demands.

- **Ensure Timely and Effective Communications**

HHS will work to ensure secure, sustainable, and redundant systems for sharing of information both among responders at all levels of government and between responders and the public. HHS will strive to improve communications across all sectors, from government emergency response systems to private-sector and community-based organizations.

- **Promote an Effective System for Developing, Manufacturing, and Dispensing Drugs, Devices, and Medical Supplies for Use in Response to a Public Health Emergency**

HHS will work toward integrating efforts for countermeasure research, manufacturing, dispensing, and safety and effectiveness tracking. HHS will foster stronger engagement and participation with all stakeholders and prioritize investments with the greatest potential to improve national health security, prevent or limit the spread of disease, and limit the clinical impact of a health incident.



Secretary's Strategic Initiatives & Key Inter-Agency Collaborations

- **Ensure Prevention or Reduction of Environmental and Other Emerging Threats to Health**

HHS will work to reduce the emerging threats from common pathogens in our food, water, and air through improved information sharing and coordinated action across human, animal, and food and agricultural agencies and sectors.

- **Incorporate Post-Incident Health Recovery into Planning and Response**

HHS will work to ensure that recovery is included in planning at all levels and promote the goal of ensuring that individuals and communities can recover from an incident through, at a minimum, the restoration of services, providers, facilities, and infrastructure.

- **Work with Cross-Border and Global Partners to Enhance National, Continental, and Global Health Security**

HHS, acting in concert with other U.S. government agencies, will work closely with global partners to address common threats around the world, enhance national capacities to detect and respond to these threats, and learn from each other's experiences.

- **Ensure that All Systems that Support National Health Security are Based Upon the Best Available Science, Evaluation, and Quality Improvement Methods**

HHS will develop and implement a research and evaluation agenda to support identification of empirical standards, policy, and guidance to increase the knowledge base for preparedness, response, and recovery.

Learn more about this priority by watching the video at <http://www.hhs.gov/secretary/about/protect.html>



Accelerate the Process of Scientific Discovery to Improve Patient Care

As part of its mission to improve the health of the American people, HHS invests in each step of the process that starts with basic scientific discovery and ends with the development and provision of better diagnostics, treatments, and preventive strategies to significantly improve patient care. These steps can be very complex, which can mean that promising scientific discoveries move too slowly toward practical application as a new diagnostic, treatment, or proven prevention regimen. The good news is that we have learned what problems can arise in this process and begun to develop solutions. We have identified the steps necessary to advance scientific breakthroughs to improve patient care.

- **Accelerate Biomedical Discovery through Innovation**

HHS will accelerate biomedical discovery through innovative methodologies and technology. HHS will continue to support fundamental discoveries that expand the knowledge base in the biomedical and associated sciences. Also of critical importance is ongoing cross-agency development of information systems capable of storing, organizing and sharing vast amounts of data with researchers around the globe, which will accelerate scientific discovery.

- **Enable Efficient Regulatory Review**

HHS will [facilitate fast-tracking of medical innovations](#) to integrate biomedical research planning and regulatory review. HHS also will support training of regulatory scientists to develop the skills necessary to integrate research planning and regulation of resulting biomedical products. HHS will develop cross-agency initiatives to support regulatory science to enhance the safety, quality, and efficiency of clinical research and medical product approval.

- **Efficiently Translate Novel Research Discoveries into Therapies**

HHS is investigating new partnerships that help academic investigators to translate basic science into new therapies – effectively “de-risking” projects for commercial development. HHS is providing researchers with large scale screening resources to facilitate identification of small molecules that may have activity against a disease target, providing resources for pre-clinical evaluation of promising therapeutics, and building a national network of clinical research centers to enable clinical trials of promising compounds.

- **Support the Science of Health Care Reform**

HHS will support patient-centered research to identify high-quality, high-value drugs, surgeries and other treatment options. HHS will support research on personalized medicine, behavioral science, health economics, and health disparities, and conduct health services research, an essential facet of a complete evidence-based health care system. HHS will examine and enhance the most effective ways to disseminate preventive, screening, diagnostic, and treatment health services into community practice. These efforts will support more effective individualized prevention efforts, as well as methods to deliver the right treatment at the right dosage to the right patient at the right time, regardless of ethnicity or socioeconomic status.



- **Disseminate Health Information to the Public**

HHS will develop a comprehensive plan for effectively disseminating health information to the public. Importantly, HHS will carefully examine the effectiveness of information tailored to underserved populations, which often have enhanced risk of certain diseases and conditions. HHS will ensure that information reaches underserved populations to improve health status.

Learn more about this priority by watching the video at <http://www.hhs.gov/secretary/about/accelerate.html>



Implement a 21st Century Food Safety System

Americans count on the safety of their food. Yet, all too often, outbreaks of foodborne illness threaten our health – it has been estimated that [one in four Americans suffers from a foodborne illness each year](#). Over the last decade, new challenges have emerged from novel disease agents, increasing globalization of the food supply chain, and an aging U.S. population. Concurrently over the last decade, HHS also has improved techniques and surveillance to detect foodborne illness. HHS has an urgent mission to strengthen and integrate the food safety system, which will require federal leadership and strong cooperation from the regulatory, public health, public, and private sectors.

Working in collaboration with federal food safety partners and the [President's Food Safety Working Group](#), we have identified the following set of actions that represent an initial step toward developing a [food safety](#) system that is flexible and responsive to current and emerging threats in the 21st century.

- **Prevent Harm to Consumers from Foodborne Illness**

Too often in the past, the food safety system has focused on reacting to problems rather than preventing harm in the first place. HHS will prioritize prevention and implement sensible measures designed to prevent problems before they occur. Key to this approach will be setting rigorous standards for food safety and working with the food industry to ensure it meets these standards.

- **Improve Data Sources and Analysis for Effective Food Safety Inspections and Enforcement**

High-quality information will help determine which foods are at highest risk; which solutions should be put into place to reduce risk; and which agencies should be responsible. That information comes from routine surveillance, outbreak investigations, and scientific studies. HHS, working in tandem with its federal, state, and local regulatory and public health partners, will prioritize crucial inspection and enforcement activity across the world; support safety efforts by states, localities, and businesses at home; and enhance data collection and analysis to guide these efforts and evaluate their outcomes. HHS agencies will work together to maximize interagency collaboration and accountability.

- **Identify and Quickly Stop Outbreaks of Foodborne Illness**

Outbreaks should be rare in number, limited in scale, and short in duration. HHS will work with its federal, state, and local partners to strengthen public health systems and establish a food tracing system in order to shorten the time between initial awareness of an outbreak to [outbreak investigation, resolution, and recovery](#).

Learn more about this priority by watching the video at
http://www.hhs.gov/secretary/about/implement_food_safety.html



Ensure Program Integrity and Responsible Stewardship

Managing over \$850 billion in public investments is an enormous responsibility - and an opportunity. Stewardship of Federal funds is more than just ensuring resources are allocated and expended responsibly. When Federal investments are managed with integrity and vigilance, the public benefits through improved health and well-being.

HHS is committed to being a responsible steward of every dollar in HHS' budget. America's hard-working citizens deserve to know that the Department is spending the monies they are investing in a healthier and brighter future as carefully and productively as the dollars they spend in their own family budgets - with accountability for results, honest disclosure of potential conflicts of interest, no allowance for waste or abuse, and ensuring that the public trust is awarded only to those individuals, institutions, grantees, and service providers with the highest ethical standards.

HHS is therefore launching a Department-wide program integrity initiative to ensure that every program and office in HHS prioritizes the identification of systemic vulnerabilities and opportunities for waste and exploitation, and implements heightened oversight. We will consult closely with HHS's Office of the Inspector General to help review plans across each part of the Department and create a first-time ever Secretary's Council on Program Integrity.

Learn more about this priority by watching the video at
http://www.hhs.gov/secretary/about/program_integrity.html



Key Inter-Agency Collaborations

- ***Reduce Teen and Unintended Pregnancy***
- ***Support the National HIV/AIDS Strategy***
- ***Improve Global Health***
- ***Foster Open Government***



Reduce Teen and Unintended Pregnancy

Teen mothers and their children are more likely to face a range of challenges and adverse conditions when it comes to the health and economic security of themselves and their children.

More than 60 percent of teen mothers live in poverty at the time of their child's birth, and there are substantial disparities in the educational attainment of teen mothers compared to young women who delay child-bearing. And children of teen parents face significant disadvantages as well, including lower school achievement and greater risk of abuse and neglect.

The Secretary has identified the following set of strategies to reduce teen and unintended pregnancy.

In addressing these strategies, HHS will draw upon the expertise of the public health and human services parts of the Department, including the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the newly created [Office of Adolescent Health](#) (OAH) and the Office of Population Affairs (OPA) within the Office of Public Health and Science.

- **Invest in Evidence-Based Teen Pregnancy Reduction Strategies**

HHS will employ a comprehensive, evidence-based approach to reducing teen pregnancy. Under the newly funded [Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program](#), HHS will fund the replication of models that have been rigorously evaluated and shown to be effective at reducing teen pregnancy or other behavioral risk factors as well as research and demonstration projects designed to test innovative strategies to prevent teen pregnancy. By conducting high-quality evaluations of both types of approaches – those replicating evidence-based models and innovative strategies – this initiative will expand the evidence base and uncover new ways to address this issue. Additional funding made available under the Affordable Care Act will provide formula grants to states to fund evidence based models and test new strategies as well. ACF, ASPE, CDC, OAH, and OPA will each play a critical role in these efforts.

- **Target Populations at Highest Risk for Teen Pregnancy**

HHS efforts will focus on demographic groups that have the highest [teen pregnancy rates](#), including Hispanic, African-American, and American Indian youth, and target services to high-risk, vulnerable and culturally under-represented youth populations, including youth in foster care, runaway and homeless youth, youth with HIV/AIDS, youth living in areas with high teen birth rates, delinquent youth, and youth who are disconnected from usual service delivery systems.

- **Increase Access to Clinical Services**

HHS will ensure access to a broad range of family planning and related preventive health services, including patient education and counseling; sexually transmitted infection (STI) and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) prevention education, testing, and referral. Services can be provided through community health centers, Title X family planning clinics, and public programs. HHS-funded health services under the Title X family planning program will encourage family participation in the decision of minors to seek family planning services and provide counseling to minors on ways to resist attempts to coerce them into engaging in sexual activity.



Support the National HIV/AIDS Strategy

Over the nearly 30 years since the AIDS epidemic began, HHS has been working closely with national, state, and local partners to [respond to the HIV and AIDS crisis](#) in the United States. Because of these efforts, we now have better diagnostic capabilities that enable us to test more people, more quickly, and we have more effective treatments that allow people living with HIV to enjoy longer, healthier lives.

However, HIV and AIDS continue to exact a significant toll on Americans of all ages. An estimated [1.1 million Americans are living with HIV today](#). More than 50,000 new infections occur each year, and 21% of those living with HIV are unaware of their status.

The face of HIV and AIDS has also changed over the last three decades – from a disease primarily affecting younger men who have sex with men (MSM) to a disease that disproportionately affects black and Latino men and women, MSM in all racial and ethnic groups, and older Americans. We must redouble our efforts to prevent new infections, ensure access to appropriate care and treatment for those living with HIV and AIDS, and focus on those communities most affected.

HHS is currently participating with federal partner agencies and the White House Office of National AIDS Policy on the development of a National HIV/AIDS Strategy that will guide our nation's efforts to address HIV and AIDS in a more strategic way.

Our goals for this initiative include:

- **Reducing the number of new HIV cases in the United States;**
- **Increasing access to care and optimize health outcomes for people living with HIV; and**
- **Reducing HIV-related disparities.**

Implementing this National Strategy will require coordinated effort across the U.S. government and with national, state, and local partners in both the public and private sectors.

HHS will work closely with other federal agencies, including the [Department of Housing and Urban Development](#), [Department of Defense](#), and [Department of Labor](#), and, within HHS, with nearly every agency in the Department.

This cross-Departmental work will include new research at the NIH; enhanced surveillance, behavioral research, and prevention activities at the [CDC](#); regulatory work at the [Food and Drug Administration](#) (FDA); and support for care, treatment, and wrap-around services provided by [HRSA](#) and the [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#) (SAMHSA). Other HHS agencies, including the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, ACF, Administration on Aging, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, and Indian Health Service, will continue to contribute significantly to our efforts to prevent HIV infections and care for those living with HIV and AIDS.



Secretary's Strategic Initiatives & Key Inter-Agency Collaborations

In the coming months, the Secretary will identify further actions to support implementation of the National HIV/AIDS Strategy including:

- **Learning More About What Works to Prevent HIV Transmission**

HHS-supported research has resulted in new drugs and diagnostics, as well as new program strategies for addressing the HIV and AIDS epidemic. However, more work is needed to identify vaccine candidates and better treatments. We also need to enhance surveillance and support significant behavioral research to identify effective interventions to prevent the spread of HIV in high-risk and other affected groups.

- **Promoting HIV Testing and Making People Aware of Their Status**

Individuals who know their status can be linked to care and treatment resources earlier in their course of disease, which will improve their likelihood of living healthier, longer lives. When HIV-positive individuals know their status, they are also less likely to engage in risky behaviors that will transmit HIV to others. HHS will increase support for efforts to increase routine testing of adults, adolescents, and pregnant women so that more people know their status.

- **Linking People Living with HIV to Prevention, Care, and Treatment**

In addition to increasing testing, we must also improve linkages to care and treatment for those who test positive for HIV. HHS will work to improve coordination and referral systems that link people living with HIV and AIDS to medical care, prevention information to reduce onward transmission, and relevant wrap-around services, such as mental health and substance abuse counseling and treatment.



Improve Global Health

[Global health](#) plays a critical role in the national security of the U.S. population and in the security of populations worldwide. As we saw during the recent [H1N1 pandemic](#), as our world and economies become more integrated, we must think about health globally, as diseases know no borders.

The President understands the significant impact the U.S. government plays in improving global health, and has called for increased investments in global health programs and an overall re-orientation of all U.S. government health assistance that emphasizes:

- **Country Ownership;**
- **Strategic Integration and Coordination;**
- **Women-centered Programming;**
- **Health Systems Strengthening; and**
- **Metrics, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Research.**

HHS has significant scientific, technical, and regulatory expertise in global health matters. Our experience helps ensure that activities are informed by research, disease surveillance, public health service delivery, medical product and food safety, and best practices to strengthen health systems. HHS is collaborating with its partners and the White House on several issues in global health, including advancing global pandemic preparedness and response, combating bio-terrorism, and implementing the [President's Global Health Initiative](#).

The Global Health Initiative invests \$63 billion over six years in a comprehensive approach to our health assistance programs, recognizing that healthy societies are stable societies. Many effective, long-standing programs, such as the [President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief](#) and the [President's Malaria Initiative](#), are part of the Global Health Initiative.

HHS, through the CDC, NIH, FDA, HRSA, and other operating divisions, is pursuing the following actions to improve global health:

- **Combating Infectious Diseases through Rapid Identification and Control Efforts**
HHS is working with countries to promote information-sharing about known diseases and public health events of international concern. As we saw with the H1N1 public health emergency, rapid identification and control of emerging infectious diseases helps promote health abroad, prevent the international spread of disease, and protect the health of the U.S. population.
- **Combating Non-Infectious Diseases through Strategic Partnerships**
Chronic, non-communicable diseases, including diabetes and obesity, tobacco use, and mental illness and substance abuse use disorders, are among the leading causes of death and disability worldwide. HHS is collaborating with other countries to implement tested strategies to fight these and other non-communicable diseases.
- **Developing a Global Health Strategy**
HHS, under the leadership of its [Office of Global Health Affairs](#), is developing and implementing a coordinated global health strategy that maximizes HHS's substantial global health assets and brings cohesion to our work, in support of the President's efforts to improve global health.



Foster Open Government

President Obama is committed to creating an unprecedented level of openness in government. The key elements of open government include transparency – providing information to the public that can be used to hold the government accountable and generate significant benefit for citizens; participation – enabling citizens to contribute their ideas to the work of government; and collaboration – providing opportunities for internal and external stakeholders to work together toward better solutions. Above all, an open government is a government that works better – one that leverages the principles of transparency, participation, and collaboration to deliver better results to the American people.

To advance these principles, the President has issued an Open Government Directive, which directs executive departments and agencies to take specific actions to promote transparency, participation, and collaboration. In response to this Directive, HHS has developed a comprehensive HHS Open Government Plan. As articulated by the Plan, HHS has directed two coordinating bodies to lead ongoing efforts to implement the concepts described above: the HHS Innovation Council, which is overseeing implementation of the collaboration and participation elements of HHS's Open Government Plan; and the HHS Data Council, which coordinates all HHS health and human services data collection and analysis activities.

As detailed in its Open Government Plan, HHS will undertake bold actions to foster open government in the coming months, including the following:

- **Leverage Data for Maximum Public Good**

HHS will undertake significant and specific new actions to present its massive collections of data in accessible formats that allow and encourage the fullest use of data, ensuring greater transparency of programs and greater accountability for results. Ensuring the transparency and accessibility of HHS's vast stores of data can help increase awareness of health and human services issues, generate insights into how to improve health and well-being, help improve HHS performance, and provide the basis for new products and services that can benefit the American people.

- **Promote Best Practices through Public Participation and Collaboration**

HHS will provide new venues and opportunities to share experiences, policies, helpful tools, and best practices across the public and private sectors. Cutting-edge approaches such as public competitions and crowdsourcing will be used to promote innovation in delivery of consumer information on patient safety and health, medical research collaborations, and user-friendly information services for health care delivery – information that can help promote the affordability and accessibility of health care, promote breakthroughs in medical research, and ultimately, help save lives.

- **Foster Innovation at HHS**

HHS will work energetically to promote a culture of innovation across the Department, including the launch of a new Secretary's Innovation Awards program, which will recognize and reward extraordinary achievements by employees who innovate how HHS operates in ways that advance its mission. Employees who demonstrate powerful ways to harness the power of transparency, participation, and collaboration to improve the results delivered by HHS will be leading candidates for Innovation Awards on an ongoing basis.